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Racist Geographies: legacies of socio-political discrimination against Afro-Costa Ricans in Limón

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Racist Geographies: legacies of socio-political discrimination against Afro-Costa Ricans in Limón

by

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to:

My parents, Jennifer and Louis Coplin for their continued love and support over the past 23 years but especially during these last two years. The countless phone calls and cards of encouragement helped me through my darkest and saddest moments.

My best girlfriends: B. Bobb, R. Bogen, and A. Bowman. We have become so much closer over the past few years due to distance and the craziness of life but I know that you all were only one phone/video call away. Thank you for your support and loving me through my most unfiltered moments.

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Abstract

Racist Geographies: legacies of socio-political discrimination against Afro- Costa Ricans in Limón

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

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This project looks at the history of the Afro-Costa Ricans in Costa Rica and their relationship with the Costa Rican government. The goal is to show that the geography of the country contributed to the marginalization and invisibility of this minority group. This has been done using archival materials from collections based in Costa Rica and secondary texts found in the United States. Upon examination of these materials it was clear that the province of Limón became a space connected with blackness and there were inequalities between citizens of the coastal province and the central valley. This research highlights the Afro- diaspora in Costa Rica, the flawed Costa Rican democracy and the effect of American Imperialism on Latin America.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Introduction

Costa Rica has presented itself as a country that exemplifies democracy, and as a welfare state that cares equally about all of its citizens by providing universal health care and education. My research focuses, however, on a social group that has experienced a very compromised citizenship. West Indian migrants and their descendants on the east coast of Costa Rica have historically suffered racial and social segregation that has been facilitated by the geographic isolation of the region. The question I seek to answer is how the geography of Costa Rica assisted in marginalizing the Afro-descendant population in the country. More specifically, how this marginality has caused the province of Limón to become a racialized space in the national imaginary. Through the theories of transculturation, transnationalism, and concepts of incorporation and double consciousness, I will also consider the history of the relationship between the hegemonic powers, the United Fruit Company and the Costa Rican government, in the province and the West Indians and their subsequent descendants.

The first step to adequately discuss this research is to define the following concepts- transnationalism, transculturation, and double consciousness and differentiate between the two generations of the east coast. Transnationalism is a concept that has many definitions and is constantly changing. However, I am going to base my analysis on the one is provided by Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc. According to them transnationalism is the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement (Rainer and Thomas 112).

Fernando Ortiz first used the term transculturation in his book *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el* azúcar. He intended for transculturation to be used as a substitute for acculturation. Ortiz used transculturation to express the phenomena of complex transmutations of race, culture, class, and gender that took place in Cuba (Ortiz 93). Ortiz published this theory in 1940 during a period when Afro-Cubans were experiencing increased discrimination from white Cubans and outsiders investing in the island economy. Furthermore, transculturation is the process of cultural transformation (as in the creation of new cultures or societies) resulting from intercultural conflict, struggle and change (Cantoral n.pag).

W.E.B. DuBois introduced the notion of double consciousness in his book The Souls of Black Folk in the following way

"It is the sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amusement contempt and pity. One ever feels his "twoness", -an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two un-reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength keep it from being torn asunder". (DuBois 2)

This concept can be used to discuss the place of minority groups across the Caribbean basin, such as the descendants of West Indian migrants to a Costa Rica that valorized its Hispanic heritage.

My project draws on links between race and topography in the Atlantic zone of Costa Rica. Costa Rican geography has affected the social and political inclusion of indigenous and Afro-descendants due to their respective locations in the country. Space

has been racialized in Costa Rica in the Limón province due to its history of foreign influence ranging from slavery to the presence of the United Fruit Company. I will first focus on how space is constructed and used, then I will concentrate on the connections between race and space, and later highlight the situation of Afro-Costa Ricans on the Atlantic coast.

Space is constructed around relationships of domination and subordination, and therefore, a connection between space formation and the process of imperialism. Space is not simply a setting but plays an active role in the construction and organization of social life. Jennifer Nelson asserts that groups marked as racially inferior have been defined, confined, regulated and eradicated through the control of space (Neely and Samura 1934). According to Neely and Samura, the four characteristics of space are contested, fluid and historical, relational and interactional, and infused with difference and inequality (1933). Contested spaces occur when conflicts engage actors whose social positions are defined by their control of resources and access to power. Fluid and historical spaces transpire because space is not fixed but something that is always changing through performance. Interlocking social relations involving different social actors produce relational and interactional space. Political struggles play out over spaces organized by the dominant groups through structures of difference and inequality (Neely and Samura 7). Lastly, Henri Lefebvre writes that one of the most consistent ways to limit economic and political rights of groups has been to constrain social reproduction by limiting access to space cited in Neely and Samura (3). Consequently, I will discuss how

identities are connected with space before delving into specific examples on Costa Rica;s east coast.

Geographies of identity refer to the sense of belonging and subjectivities that are composed in different spaces and social sites. Afro-descendant subjects throughout Latin America find their social exclusion is inextricably linked with their spatial marginalization (Busdiecker 105). Communities of color have experienced social subordination in the form of spatial regulation; using spatial frameworks we can see space as one element of the creation and maintenance of social inequality. Space is a more tangible manifestation of racial inequalities (Neely and Samura 9).

Race and space intersect over four areas. The foundation for these interactions usually involves political struggles. The contestation over built environment; the everyday embodiment and performed social lives of people; the movement, displacement and placement of people; and the social relationships engaged in by individuals and groups (Neely and Samura 1941). Many Latin American countries that form the basin of the Caribbean have similar topographies. In Colombia, for example, the national space has three distinctive associations: black- coastal; white/mestizo- interior; Amerindians- lowlands (Barton 159). Although Costa Rica did have a slave holding system, most of the Afro- Costa Ricans descend from the most recent migrations influenced by the United Fruit Company. Costa Rica's social geography is similar to Colombia's since the mountainous valleys were home to the indigenous communities, the whites and mestizos were mostly located in the central, fertile valleys and the black populations stayed on the coastal plains (Putnam 16). Historically, the use of space in the Caribbean by slaves and

their descendants has been contested, with maroon communities forming their own spaces and attacking settlements.

My thesis focuses on the impact of the United Fruit Company on the geography of race on the Costa Rican eastern coast. I have divided the thesis into four chapters; each one corresponds to a different historical period of the region and each interval is analyzed through a different theoretical framework. Chapter One analyses the period before the arrival of the United Fruit Company and provides a historical background of African descendants in Costa Rica. Chapter Two examines the presence of the United Fruit Company in the Atlantic zone through the lenses of transnationalism. Chapter Three reads the interlude after the company relocated to the western region of Costa Rica through the theory of transculturation. Chapter Four examines the transformation of the group from West Indians to Afro-Costa Ricans through physical and political incorporation and the concept of double consciousness.

While there are seminal histories of this region and a growing body of scholarship on this minority group, work on the interaction between race and geography/space is still emerging. I will be drawing on archival materials that I obtained during my fieldwork in San José during the summer of 2012. There are two key texts that explore the background history of West Indians in Costa Rica in the late 19th to early 20th centuries. The first, *Monografia Historica de la Provincia* de Limón was published in 1980. This presents a compilation of the history of Limón from the pre Columbian era until the 1980s. It gives the social context and the cultural contribution of the West Indian group in the Atlantic zone. The second, *Rutas de la Esclavitud en Africa y America Latina,* published in 2001,

showcases the history of African descendants in the area before the American and British imperialists arrived in the late 18th century. The historical works conclude that the black presence in Costa Rica was waning due to migration and the intermarriage of former slaves with neighboring indigenous populations and Hispanic Costa Ricans. Therefore, the presence of the United Fruit Company on the east coast was a major factor in the production of a demographically black space on the east coast.

Transnationalism will be examined in the section pertaining to the arrival of the United Fruit Company. One of the primary sources underpinning the argument of my thesis was located at the National Archives of Costa Rica. It is a petition to ban West Indians from entering the country during the 1930s to find work. I also discovered four written testimonies from West Indian workers after their wrongful arrest in Puerto Limón. It provided documentation of brutality and racism against this social group. In terms of secondary sources, *The Company They Kept* by Laura Putnam deals with the migrants and the politics of the Caribbean coast from 1870-1960. It was unlike other sources because it focuses on the women of the zone, and how men attempted to control and police them. It also highlights the cultural and social systems impacted by the United Fruit Company's presence. Lastly, *Limón 1880-1940* by Jeffrey Casey Gaspar concentrates on the macroeconomics of the banana industry by focusing on the pseudo-caste system of the workers and managers and the impact on the national and exportation economies.

The thesis makes use of the notions of transculturation when discussing identity complexes that were formed as the Costa Rican government began controlling the school

system. It was during this time that the younger generations began to change due to the influence of the government. The citizenship requirements of the constitutions were reviewed in order to observe if the requirements changed due to the larger presence of West Indians. *A Study of Puerto Limón, Costa Rica*, an MA thesis I located at the University of Costa Rica library focused on the building of a road to Puerto Limón connecting the capital and the coastal port and its affects on attempts to integrate the area. *What Happen* by Paula Palmer demonstrates diverse processes of cultural change and conflict associated with transculturation because it is a historical account of the West Indians and the their descendents told by the residents of the province. It is important source because it breaks down the history of the area into three distinct eras, and explores the experiences of the migrants who chose to stay in Costa Rica instead of returning to their home countries after the company left. *El Negro en Costa Rica* by Carlos Melendez and Quince Duncan presents the history of blacks in Costa Rica until the seventies. It was written to give definition to a group that was ignored by the national government. It also sought to influence the government to adopt effective policies to eliminate the racial discrimination. *Banana Fallout* by Trevor Purcell aimed to show that Afro-Costa Ricans are a significant minority in a country that chooses to project the image of being a white country. It also demonstrates that within the Afro-Costa Rican culture there are many sub groups with different values and from various classes. *Teaching Limón speakers Spanish* by Fernando Wright ties heavily into the process of transculturation since language acquisition is an important part of the cultural transformation. It reviewed the language

barrier and why it is a significant impediment to remaining outside of mainstream Costa Rican society.

Double consciousness will be applied to thinking about the experiences of the third and subsequent generations because they were faced with recognizing the ambivalence of their citizenship while confronting their blackness. Government commissioned reports discovered at the library of University of Costa Rica proved to be illuminating in regards to the relationship between the coastal communities and the national government. *The Estado de la investigación científico y la acción social sobre la region Atlántica de Costa Rica* sought to reunite the various groups in the Atlantic region and discusses the past and future expectations of the Atlantic zone (1988). Two sources that contributed to the section on education in Limón were the *Colegio Universitario* and *Guia Curricular para incorporar elementos de la cultura*. The *Colegio* is a report that investigated the Leyes 7941 and 6541 that increased the education standards of high school students in Limón, and helped to open up higher education to those students. These laws helped to create an alternative education model for students that would better prepare them for productive lives. The *Guia Curricular* was intended to provide a guide to educators and creators of curriculum on how to incorporate elements of the Limonese culture into school lessons and embrace diversity. *Pluralism in Puerto Limón,* a dissertation completed in the sixties by Michael Olien, focused attention on the two groups that co-existed in the area and how they interacted with each other while at the same time forming segregated spaces during the period of incorporation in the Limón province. The following sources, *Localidades Marginales Urbana y Rurales*

commissioned in 1979 and *Limón Analisis de Movilización* published in 1989 were also useful in researching the thesis because they display the problems of the marginalized communities and how outside forces have influenced their substandard living conditions. *Place, Language, and Identity in Afro-Costa Rican Literature* by Dorothy E. Mosby was reviewed to show how the experiences of Afro-Costa Ricans have affected some of their most prominent writers. Lastly when considering the future of Afro-Costa Ricans in the national landscape, the development plan, *Limón hacia El Siglo XXI* which was published in 2000 gives insights into future plans for the region. It is important because it is the most recent source I was able to find, it included information provided by agencies in the Limón province, and it was a projection of a positive future for the province with an emphasis on political inclusion and geographic specificity.

Throughout my research I have found that the group in Limón was called several names. West Indians, Caribbean Blacks, Afro-Costa Ricans and Afro-descendants. I have used West Indians to describe the first two generations because they were more likely to speak English and resisted learning Spanish and Costa Rican authority. I described the second group as Afro-Costa Ricans because they were bilingual and attempted to integrate more into Costa Rican society.

METHODOLOGY

This research assesses the extent to which the commercial decision to import workers for the banana plantations had lasting effects on some of the social policies of the Costa Rican government and the quality of citizenship of Afro-Costa Ricans. My research contributes to the field of African Diaspora studies by engaging in an analysis of

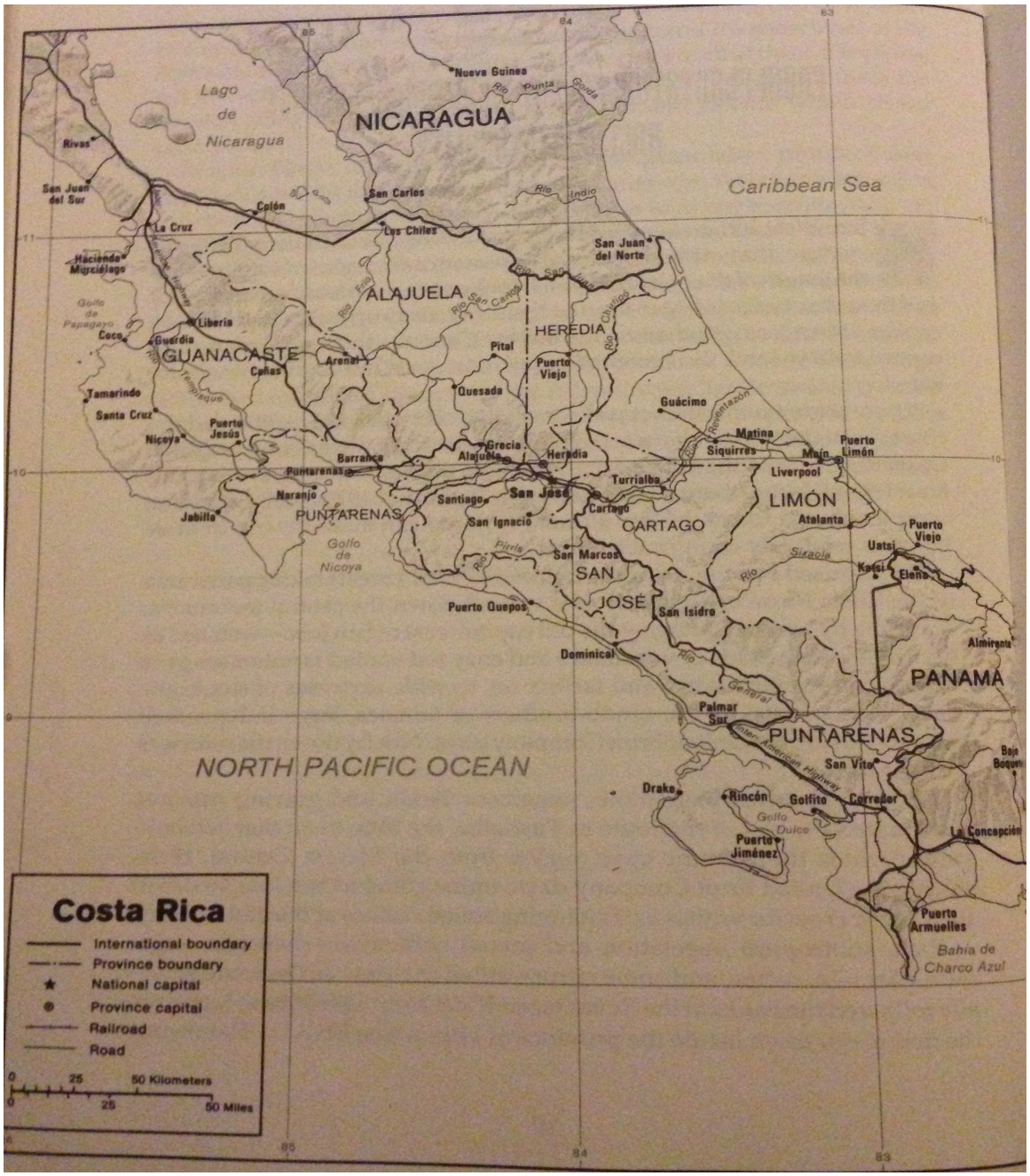
a diasporic community that has not been studied much, as a result of government policies that denied physical and socio- economic mobility as well as wider prejudice and discrimination. My study adds to the field of Latin American Studies it its consideration of a flawed Costa Rican democracy, and provides illuminating insights into a moment of American imperialism on Latin American soil. I am primarily studying the Limón province because West Indian immigrants, due to the presence of the United Fruit Company and their preference to hire British West Indians, heavily populated it. This province merits study because the West Indian migrants stayed there involuntarily and voluntarily. I also make occasional reference to the Talamanca coast, a rural area in the southern region of the province that is close to the border with Panama and heavily populated with Afro-descendents.

To survey the time periods after the departure of the United Fruit Company, I traveled to San José during the summer of 2012 and relied on archival sources from the University of Costa Rica, national archives, and the library of the national assembly. Upon returning, I used the Benson Latin American collection for historical information. The data I acquired ranged from government commissioned reports to written testimonies about life in the province. To analyze the material, I divided the sources into four categories to correlate with the time periods and theories I argue.

Chapter I: Historical Background

This is a brief historical context that highlights Limón's construction as a space of black geography well before the arrival of the United Fruit Company. During the colonization of Costa Rica, settlers tried to inhabit the tropical areas but could never take complete control of the coastal lands from the indigenous groups or the pirates. The first mention of a black presence on the coast was from the north. The Zambos Miskitos, as they have been described by Chacon and Molina were from the Caribbean coast of present day Nicaragua and were descendents of the African slaves who had mixed with the local indigenous tribes. The other hindrance to settlement was the constant threat of pirates stealing crops and killing settlers. Cacao was the valuable crop and by 1781 over 220,000 pounds had been stolen from settlements along the coast. According to the protocols of the colonial province, the slaves on the coast were from the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone, and New Guinea (Chacon and Molina 61). Most of the slaves in Central America were purchased from the English in Jamaica insinuating that a West Indian link was established before the arrival of the fruit companies (Purcell 2). Slavery in Costa Rica was not as prevalent as it was in other parts of Latin America, however it was recorded that slaves traveled across the country when searching for the pacific coast from 1522-1523. Slaves also helped to colonize the Central Valley in 1544 (Melendez and Duncan 22).

Map of Costa Rica



(Purcell 20)

In the mid 17th century the market for chocolate was expanding due to European demand. Limón was a perfect location due to the ports on the Atlantic, a suitable climate, existing wild cacao and a large indigenous population; however it's heavy rainfall and high humidity caused the colonists to shun the area due to fears for their immune systems. By the beginning of the 18th century, the Spanish settlers had exhausted the indigenous work force and began importing African captives to work the cacao haciendas. Due to the relative absence of the Spanish landowners, the male slaves in the Limón province were granted relative autonomy compared to black males in other slave holding societies (Gudmudson and Wolfe 57). After the introduction of slavery to Costa Rica, communities of cimarrones began to appear in the rainforests that divided the country. The four-recorded Cimarron settlements were near the river Cimarron, between the settlements of Siquerres and Banano, near the town of Turrialba, and Siquerres. Due to the physical geography of the country the Cimarron settlements had the ability to survive with out interference from the white settlers in the central valley (Pujol and Vega 34).

Costa Rica tried to establish a clear caste system, separating the Spanish from the mestizos, mulatos, zambos, and slaves. However, due to the size of the country castes had to mix to survive (Melendez and Duncan 37). Individuals from all socio-economic classes worked the haciendas on the coast, however, since most Spaniards decided not to live in the Atlantic zone it had important implications for the defense of the province. The bulk of the military forces were made up of free mulattos (Gudmundson and Wolfe 74). The country had its own period of plantation slavery, but not of the magnitude of Cuba or

the Dominican Republic. There were never more than 200 slaves in the country at one time and it was not enough to significantly darken the population. Also, since the white population outnumbered the slave and free black population, there was no reason for the white settlers to feel threatened physically or economically. The cacao plantations' isolation from the owners led to many slaves running away and joining the Miskito and other indigenous populations (Purcell 2). By the early 18th century, Costa Rica began using cacao as legal tender. Enslaved men on the coast had easy access to cacao and, therefore, money as any other citizen. The majority of the slaves on the coast were male, and the female slaves were forced to live closer to the central valley with their slave masters. Intermarriage between slaves was low due to the fact that any children born of enslaved women were automatically enslaved and that males rarely went to the central valley. By the mid 18th century, the free population of African descent continued to grow as the enslaved population decreased. There was an increase of mixed marriages, and within a few decades the descendants of the slaves receded from being an identifiable group. Geography played into the freedom and social mobility of the enslaved men on the coast since they only received those benefits due to the Spaniards deeming the coast an unhealthy and dangerous place for whites, but fit for blacks (Gudmundson and Wolfe 66).

The eventually decline of slavery in Costa Rica began when hacienda owners realized how often the settlements were robbed by the Miskitos and pirates. It became increasingly difficult to hire overseers, even with a higher pay than the valley, since many were killed protecting the properties of their employers (Chacon and Molina 89).

Relational and interactional space played a significant role in the end of slavery, because the social actors outside of the Costa Rican nation state affected the profitability of slavery and changed the social relations between the slaves and their owners (Neely and Samura 1944). The abolition movement gained followers after the Haitian revolution. Although some church officials did not support abolition, they did advocate for the fair treatment of men (Melendez and Duncan 38). I believe the cost factors of maintaining a farm on the coast while in the central valley along with the competition from other colonies in regards to the cacao market led the Costa Rican landowners to slowly abandon their farms (Chacon and Molina 89). Slavery was not debated again until 1822 at the meeting of the Federal Assembly of Central America. It was decided there that the children of slaves would be free and that those still enslaved could purchase their freedom at half their worth. The law went into effect in 1824 and each province of Central America established a form of the freedman's bureau (Melendez and Duncan 40).

Paula Palmer spent two years working on the Talamanca Coast of southeastern Costa Rica and was able to interview and record the memories of those who were children during the banana booms and descendants of the original inhabitants of the coast Before the end of slavery, West Indians came into the region as peddlers arriving on fishing schooners, traveling overland in mules, and teaching English to the indigenous population (Purcell 2). Other settlers were migratory and came for a few months out of the year beginning in the late 18th century. They were turtle fisherman who came annually from March to September, before settling with local indigenous women or the women from their home countries of Nicaragua or along the northern coast of Costa Rica.

The fishermen survived by hunting turtles and selling the meat, eggs, oil and shells. During the second half of the 19th century more English speaking Afro-Caribbean families moved into the region and established farms along the creeks inland. After the 1890 completion of the railroad connecting San José to the Caribbean Sea and Panama's war of independence, more families moved to the coast providing an ample population to cultivate the local economy. Outside of the turtle market, the coconut market grew as a result of the immigration to Limón. The present plants are from the original seedlings brought by the Nicaraguan and Panamanian immigrants. The coconut economy is still important to the region and provided oil for cooking, and was mainly produced by the women of the coast. The residents of the coast had to be extremely self reliant since there was no road to travel into the country and sea transport was difficult and unpredictable. The residents cultivated all of their food, as well as making all of their shoes, bedding, instruments, salt and charcoal (Palmer 35). The region was a trans Caribbean space due to the history of mobility, diaspora, settlers, and exchanges, all before the arrival of the United Fruit Company. The arrival of the Company brought a second wave of immigrants whose dynamics with the space were quite different. The major difference between the first and second waves of blackness in Costa Rica was the forced migration of the first wave through slavery. The first wave was more likely to born in Africa without connections to the Caribbean islands, and would have been new to the concept of chattel slavery. Contractors recruited the second wave to work on the banana plantations and they were accustomed to earning a wage. The second wave had no barrier to understanding and interacting with white people, or working in a climate similar to the

coastal lands of Costa Rica due to the West Indies' history with British colonizers. The United Fruit Company had the ability to influence the mobility and migration of hundreds of thousands of people because of the massive land holdings in the circum-Caribbean countries and their need for laborers. It was at this time that the fruit companies began gaining a foothold in the Limón province and country.

Chapter II: Transnationalism in the Atlantic Zone

Costa Rica was the birthplace of the United Fruit Company. It began as a railroad company with bananas planted on the side of the railway to shade the tracks into one of the first multinational companies. Keith Minor arrived initially in Costa Rica with his older brother, Henry Keith, to build the railway that would connect the central valley to the Atlantic coast in 1871. He was in charge of hiring the work force and the commissary before his brother died. After his death, Keith Minor took over the railroad contracts. The contract stated that 150 kilometers of track would be laid over three years at the cost of 1.6 million sterling pounds, yet the project took 16 years and more than 5 million sterling pounds. After its completion the Costa Rican government did not own their track instead the British shareholders leased it for 99 years. Keith signed other contracts to complete branches of railway connecting the country to the main line and was granted over 800,000 acres of public land for 20 years. This contract stipulated that if not sold during that time it would be returned to the state. Minor quickly transferred ownership to the River Plate Trust and a loan agency in London. This land would later become the beginning of the United Fruit Company land holdings. Keith Minor developed a monopoly of the railways in Costa Rica because he consolidated all of the tracks he laid in Costa Rica, named it the Northern Railway Company and paid the government 600,000 sterling pounds for their initial investment (Chapman 27). The Costa Rican railway was transferred to the Northern Railway Company illegally in 1905 for a term of 99 years. Although some politicians saw a monopoly forming, it allowed Minor to organize the two companies to in order to operate them effectively. The Northern railway

company was a subsidiary of the United Fruit Company and Minor was later able ship his product throughout the country for no cost. The government of Costa Rica and Keith Minor had a strong relationship that was rooted in Minor's business acumen and the availability of land in Costa Rica. Minor took advantage of the opportunity to have a commanding presence in Costa Rica because the finances of the country were in disarray, and by building the railways he was able to help finance and modernize the country. This led to him obtaining privileges in railroading, governmental finance, and the development of the banana industry (Kepner and Soothill 25). Such privileges were evident, for example in 1893, when one of the companies that handled Minors' bananas in New Orleans went bankrupt. Minor became vulnerable to a takeover and close to bankruptcy. The Costa Rican government instead voted to give Minor funds from the national treasury to keep his company afloat (Chapman 40). At the climax of the company's power it became known as the octopus because of their power throughout Central America and the Caribbean. It had enormous bargaining power because they employed over 70,000 workers and farmed over 1.8 million acres in nine countries. The company had control over several forms of transportation and infrastructure such as water works, sewage plants, railways, and electric companies (Harpelle 68). This power resulted in successfully undercutting national sovereignty, at times diminishing state power; however state and company officials worked together, or in conflict with each other when different sectors deemed it necessary (Putnam 12).

The building of the railroads and the expansion of the mass plantation model allowed for a repopulation of the area by immigrants willing to work in the humid

climate. The movement of site of production was a fundamental expansion of modern capitalism. This transnational space historically allowed for the fluidity and flexibility of large movements of people, and this continued as Afro-descendent workers from the islands traveled to the rim of the Caribbean to work on the largest plantations in Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, and Venezuela. This movement of West Indians created a black presence in some countries or added to the existing population. The railroads facilitated greater settlement of the province of Limón and after the completion of the railroad, laid off Jamaicans were persuaded to settle in the province with offers of free land, a half acre lot for any worker willing to establish a farm between Limón and Camp Two. The Costa Rican government was willing to part with coastal lands once again to dark-skinned migrants (Putnam 42).

The Limón province was home to three distinct cultures that, of West Indian workers, American businessmen, and the Costa Rican government, during the age of the banana boom. It represents a fluid and historical space due to the space changing through performance. It changed from a swampy, tropical area to a productive, agricultural port serving neo-imperialists (Neely and Samura 1943). To adequately discuss the results of this cultural mix I will be drawing on transnationalism and borderland theory. One variant of transnationalist thinking, as discussed earlier, encompasses processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.

According to the census of 1883, 47% of the population in Limón was originally from the Caribbean islands and this was after the railroads had been completed. During

the period of the railroad building, there was a small population of Jamaicans living outside of the Atlantic zone but they were not employed on the large scale of those residing on the coast. The mobility of the immigrants had not been restricted at this time, showing that the government did not feel threatened because the foreign population was small. The production of a black territory was accentuated after the failure of the employment efforts in the interior of the country and before the beginning of the banana boom. The largest populations of blacks in Costa Rica were limited to the Limón Province doing manual work. In the late 19th century, the Costa Rican government was interested in attracting small claimants for the land instead of putting tens of thousands of acres into the hands of wealthy and well-connected individuals from Costa Rica, Colombia, the Spanish Caribbean and Europe. The minister of development reported in 1884 that in order to attract African immigrants, namely West Indians, who could be the only ones to bear the elevated temperature of the localities, the government had to expand, remove the restrictions, and facilitate the process of acquiring property (Putnam 49). Through the formation of the United Fruit Company and the recruitment efforts made by private contractors and United Fruit representatives, the idea of a black, foreign territory was cemented. The following statistics give insight to the population expansion during times of exportation of bananas and after the company relocated (Gaspar 228).

The growth of the population versus the exportations of bananas

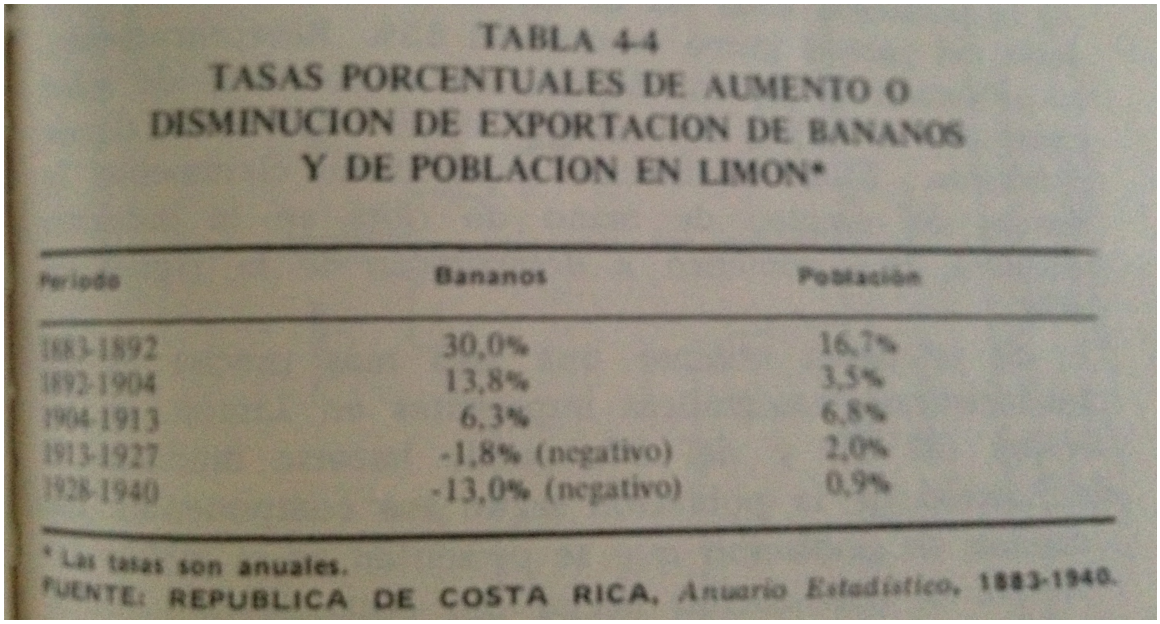


TABLA 4-4
TASAS PORCENTUALES DE AUMENTO O DISMINUCION DE EXPORTACION DE BANANOS Y DE POBLACION EN LIMON*

Período	Bananos	Población
1883-1892	30,0%	16,7%
1892-1904	13,8%	3,5%
1904-1913	6,3%	6,8%
1913-1927	-1,8% (negativo)	2,0%
1928-1940	-13,0% (negativo)	0,9%

* Las tasas son anuales.
FUENTE: REPUBLICA DE COSTA RICA, *Anuario Estadístico*, 1883-1940.

(Gaspar 228)

The census of 1927 accounted for 18,003 blacks in the province of Limón. This represented 94% of the black population in the country. They were also a little more than 56% of the total population in Limón. From 1892 to 1927 the black population grew annually by 4.1%, which corresponds with the increase in the population of color to 10.5% per year due to immigration (Gaspar 236).

The rates of population growth by area of origin

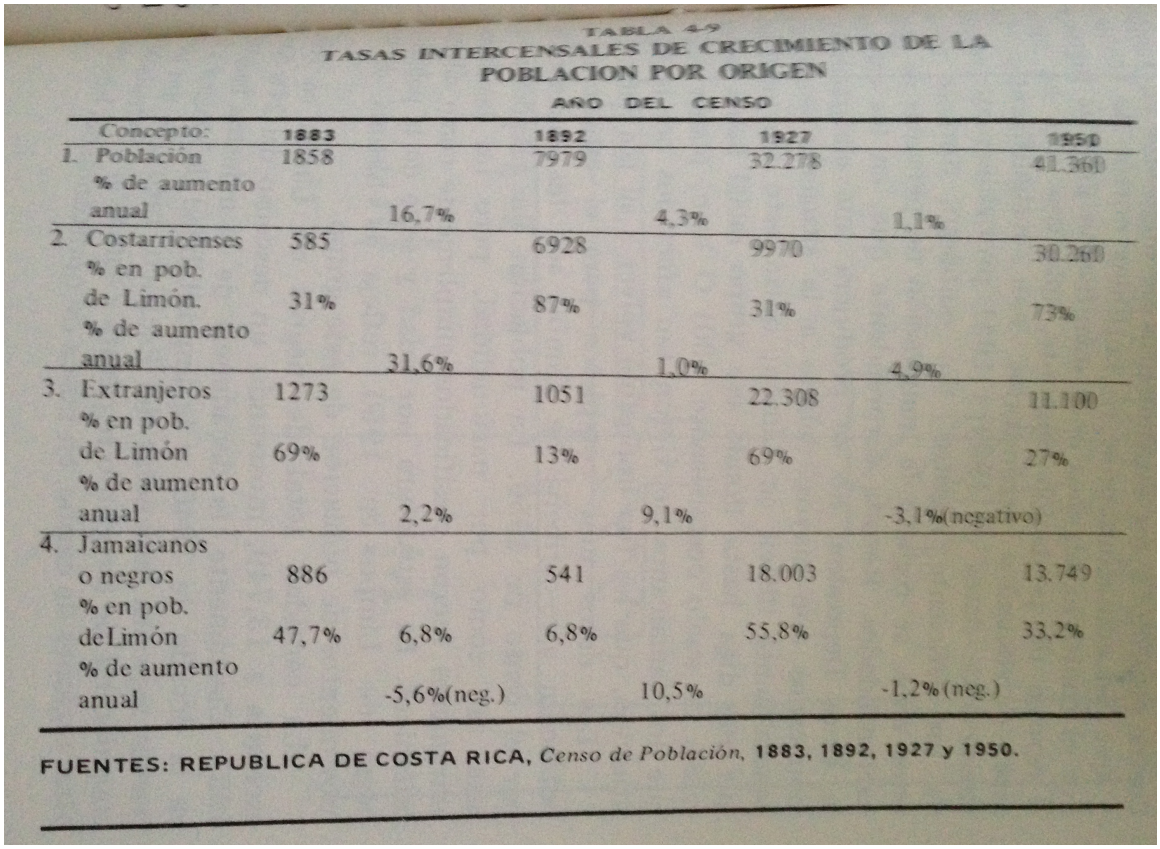


TABLA 4-9

TASAS INTERCENSALES DE CRECIMIENTO DE LA POBLACION POR ORIGEN

Concepto:	1883		1892		1927		1950
	AÑO DEL CENSO						
1. Población	1858		7979		32.278		41.360
% de aumento anual		16,7%		4,3%		1,1%	
2. Costarricenses	585		6928		9970		30.260
% en pob. de Limón.	31%		87%		31%		73%
% de aumento anual		31,6%		1,0%		4,9%	
3. Extranjeros	1273		1051		22.308		11.100
% en pob. de Limón	69%		13%		69%		27%
% de aumento anual		2,2%		9,1%		-3,1%(negativo)	
4. Jamaicanos o negros	886		541		18.003		13.749
% en pob. deLimón	47,7%	6,8%	6,8%		55,8%		33,2%
% de aumento anual		-5,6%(neg.)		10,5%		-1,2%(neg.)	

FUENTES: REPUBLICA DE COSTA RICA, *Censo de Población*, 1883, 1892, 1927 y 1950.

(Gaspar 239)

Before the worldwide depression, public health and government officials worked to push the Chinese out of the country after the railroad companies had conscripted them. The Chinese were accused of spreading vice and disease even when they were contributing to the economy of the country. The Chinese and the West Indians were differed in terms of their entrance in the country and their treatment. The Chinese were often abused, held captive, whipped and chained as needed. Although they were not sold as slaves, their labor contracts were often sold between suppliers. The West Indians were closer to their home countries and only had to get on one of the ships crisscrossing the Caribbean Sea if

they were abused. Their ease of exit and access to British imperial officers, who would intervene on their behalf, improved the conditions that local officials were willing to offer. In contrast, the West Indians enjoyed a generally positive image as long as they stayed on the coast and their labor was needed. Theoretically, there was no law or de facto segregation before the ratification of the 1934 contract and West Indians could travel wherever they were needed (Putnam 40).

The international movement of West Indian workers resulted in commercial success and development of the plantation system of the United Fruit Company and the re-population of Limón. The West Indians were originally introduced to build the railroad and although some sources have claimed that the Costa Ricans from the central valley did not like to work on the coast due to weather, it may have been due to a conflicting coffee harvest timeline (Gaspar). To get support for their endeavors in Costa Rica and other tropical areas, the company created publications describing the tropical endeavor as the American vanguard of the worldwide white man's mission. These pamphlets were intended for the stockholders in the company as well as Congress. Frederick Upham Adams, the author, of The Conquest of the Tropics: The Story of the Creative Enterprises Conducted by the United Fruit Company, stated in 1914 that the progress south of the Rio Grande, in Mexico, Central and South America, was the result of Caucasian initiative and would eventual lead to supremacy. In reality, the Company's officials may have had ideologies about race and gender but they were in Costa Rica and other locations to make a profit; and did not try to instill American values, promote the United States version of a nuclear family, or make moral improvement on the lives of their Costa Rican and West

Indian employees (Putnam 8). The United Fruit Company recruited men primarily for their labor and women eventually followed to work as cooks, laundresses, and prostitutes outside of camps in the jungle and in Limón. On various occasions the province of Limón tried to control the vice districts by registering the prostitutes, making sure they received the proper medical care, and taxing them (Putnam 81). The company officials did not attempt to stop the growth of vice district surrounding the camps, business hubs, or Puerto Limón; effectively contradicting the distributed booklets that paid lip service to promoting American values.

At the turn of the 20th century migration of West Indians to Central Americas was a mix of private recruitment and spontaneous and regular departures of schooners and the great white fleet. In Trinidad, Guyana, and Jamaica there were indentured labor schemes that brought men over on contracts. Private contractors usually reneged on their promises to send West Indian men back to their home countries after their contracts were completed. The British government organized the migration of East Indians to Central America and honored the commitments of their labor contracts since it was seen as a practical way of justifying their imperial rule by caring for their subjects. The British government was more responsive to complaints of immorality and violence than the Company officials ever were (Putnam 81).

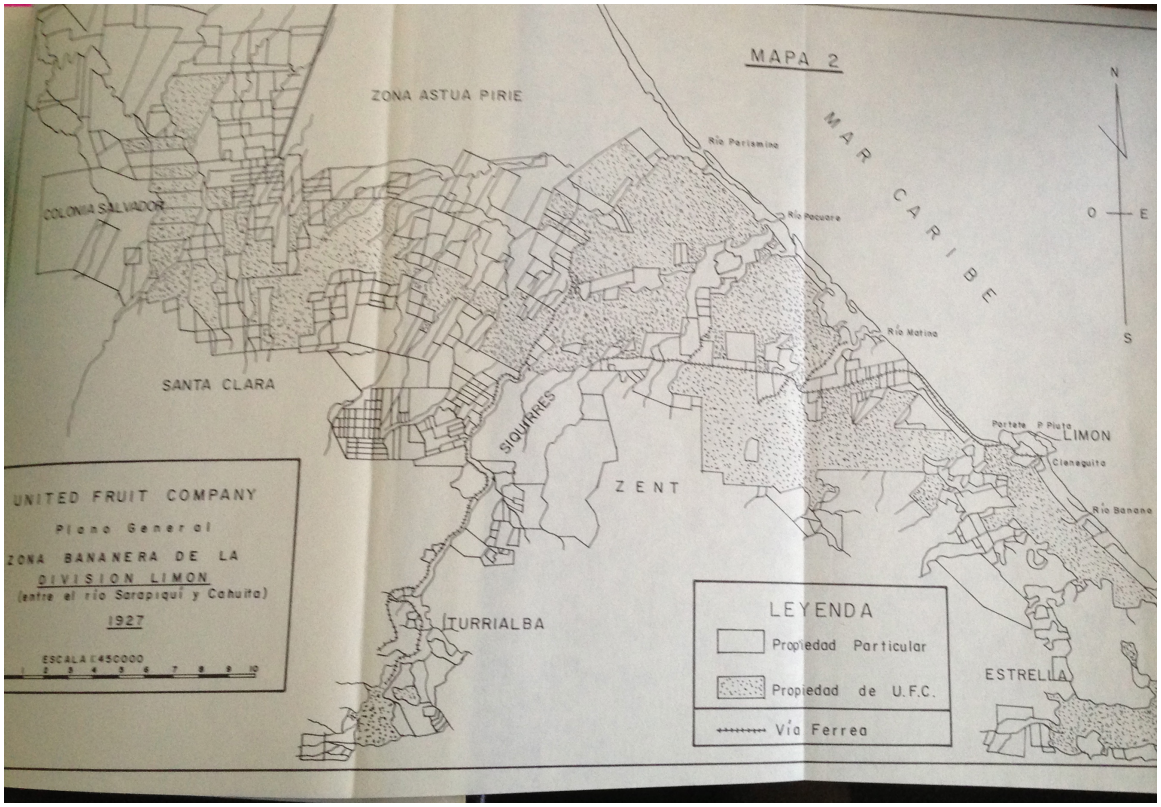
The two primary sources that provide the backbone to my argument about the discrimination and prejudice faced by the West Indian migrants are the petition sent to the Congress of Costa Rica by the Hispanic citizens of the Limón province and the testimonies written by five West Indian workers harassed by the authorities. The petition

was produced in 1933 and signed by over 500 residents and landowners. The world and country were going through the Great Depression and the amount of work available in the region was at its lowest since the arrival of the foreign fruit companies. The citizens claimed there were social conflicts in the region since the West Indians had arrived and that the region was not used to such unrest. They referred specifically to the West Indian perceptions they held a position of privilege in the province and that the Hispanic whites were inferior. The West Indians position of privilege came from their British citizenship and greater ability to communicate with the United Fruit company managers. The West Indians perceived their Costa Rican peers as weak, uneducated peasants who needed the strength of the immigrants in order to be profitable. The Hispanic whites who lived in the region felt it was impossible to live with the West Indians because they had bad customs, did not honor women, lived in promiscuity, and would ruin the good nature of the Costa Ricans.

The United Fruit Company served as a transnational space because it involved the global reorganization of the production process, in which various stages of production of any product, in this case fruit, can occur in various countries, typically with the aim of minimizing costs. By 1926, the company employed 70,000 workers, farmed 1,834,000 acres in nine countries. In addition to bananas, sugar cane, coconuts and cacao were produced. In addition, they had 31,000 head of cattle, 11,000 draught animals, owned 93 ships, and controlled 1,542 miles of railway, 722 miles of tramways, 187 locomotives, 22 tram trains, 5,320 railway cars, and 1859 tram cars. Lastly, the company operated radio

telegraphy, telegraph and telephone lines, sugar mills and a refinery, ice plants, electric plants, laundries, hospitals, water works and sewages systems (Harpelle 68).

Map of Banana Zone in the Limón Division



(Gaspar)

Through the control of these products and services the company gained the ability to minimize cost, maximize profits and organized their operation in the most efficient means possible irrespective of political boundaries. The company connected the Atlantic region of Costa Rica to the rest of the world and brought hundreds of thousands of workers to the area. Workers were able to move relatively freely between their home countries and Limón, as well as other countries on the port schedule of the Great White

Fleet. The residents acknowledged that the country permitted the workers to enter for the construction of the railroad as long as they did not go past the town of Turrialba and accounted for over 70 percent of the population in Limón in comparison with the white population. The residents complained that the workers were going past the banana zone when this was a practice that had always been discouraged. They named the United Fruit Company as being responsible for the difficult situation the country was in and accused it of exploiting the country by not hiring White Costa Ricans, but West Indians. According to the petition, this caused the White Costa Ricans to be poor, without food and homes. They claimed the province was losing its independence and would end up a colony of the company. The use of colony was not unintentional, it was meant to remind the Costa Rican congress of its history with Spain while at the same time appealing to the autonomy of the state. They asked that the congress take a census of all of the foreign Blacks in the province and follow the path of other nations by forcing them to return to their countries of origin, then institute a law that would prohibit blacks from entering the country and gaining citizenship. They ended the petition with "we hope that the constitutional congress, inspired by us, has feelings of patriotism and protection of the working classes and to dictate the measures necessary to immediately finish this evil". In the end, the petitioners were not successful in rallying congress to block the entrance and naturalization of West Indians to the region and country. However, I am making the connection between the segregated spaces created for the West Indian workers and how they could only stay east of Turrialba to remain non-threatening to the white population of Costa Rica. Also once the country was no longer prosperous, the racialized space to

which they were delimited was no longer permissible. They were pushed out of the country by the restriction on movement past Turrialba and decreased job opportunities since the United Fruit Company and its subsidiaries were obliged to ensure at least 60% of their employees were of Hispanic Costa Rican descent.

My other primary source is made up of testimonies of five men who had been falsely arrested for vagrancy in the city of Limón in September of 1903. They all shared the similar story of being approached by a police officer, arrested and having to pay a fine in order to be released. There was no evidence presented to prove their vagrancy and all of them had a job. The men, as described in their testimonies, were not treated justly during their arrest and when they had witnesses to attest to their backgrounds the information was not taken into account. All five men worked for the United Fruit Company in some capacity, and had been in the country ranging from two to twenty-eight years. The testimonies were not given in Spanish, but English to the British Vice consulate of Port Limón. When the men were released and did not pay a fine they were under the responsibility of the Vice consulate. In this transnational space the presence of the British was an extension of their earlier imperialist achievements although they did not colonize the Limón province or Costa Rica. The British established a consulate to protect their citizens and their business interests from exploitation, since the majority of United Fruit Company's stockholders were British. It also allowed for the West Indian migrants to maintain their connection with the various British colonized islands. Compared to the United States, the British form of imperialism was based on colonizing all the countries that benefited the empire while the United States form of imperialism

occurred more through the work of multinational companies protected by the American government. These arrests show the negative side effects of transnationalism and what can happen when diverse groups share space yet do not respect the social and cultural differences that each faction brings to the space. The West Indian laborers did not speak Spanish and were being arrested by a Spanish-speaking official, who most likely resented the presence of the Black laborers since they were a representation of a foreign company. The workers then had to interact with a White British official that although they were colonial subjects were, did not see them as equals because of their colonized status and their color.

The Limón province became the private enclave of the United Fruit Company and they were allowed to exercise complete control over the land and the inhabitants. The company had their own set of labor laws and the host country's laws were suspended in United Fruit Company territory. They even had their own security forces and spies for those who complained too much (Purcell 32). Language was a powerful tool and will be discussed in further detail with regard to transculturation. During the time of the fruit company, those who spoke English had a higher position on the social ladder because they could communicate with the supervisor, placing West Indians and American Blacks above the Hispanics (Purcell 32). In order to control the work force, United Fruit built upon the existing divisions between the Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. For example, there was recruitment among the different islands in the Caribbean because the managers knew of the internal divisions in the Caribbean and capitalized on the rivalries to avoid groups banding together during strikes (Harpelle 26). There were also differences

between African Americans and their West Indian counterparts. The groups of American Blacks that did work on the banana plantations were often seen as snobby due to their attitudes of entitlement in relation to West Indians. (Harpelle 27) There were numerous instances of groups spying on each other, from the Black Americans on the West Indians, to the West Indians on the Hispanic group. The company made sure that groups performed different tasks, the whites were the supervisors, the educated usually light skin Jamaicans were the foremen and the timekeepers, and the darker skin West Indians and Hispanics were the common laborers. The positions equaled the housing arrangements in size, comfort, and appearance. The common laborers lived in barrack style housing with partitioned rooms for several men to share a space. In all aspects of life the three groups were separated. Outside of the company, they had their own social organizations, religious institutions and only mixed when it was absolutely necessary. Many West Indian parents did not allow their children to play with their Hispanic peers due to the stereotypes that the community had. The West Indians had a need to approximate the values set in their home islands. They had a large number of non-kin based organizations such as the United Negro Improvement Association, The Burial Scheme, which served as a mutual aid society, the onward and upward society and the Forward Growth society. Most of the West Indians were protestant in a Catholic country. The church was important in the emergence of the Afro-Costa Rican community because they were able to draw on the religious and social connections in their isolation (Purcell). The company wanted to maintain the country divisions and allowed particular groups like Jamaican Burial Association and the St. Kitts Sports Club to use company space for meetings.

These island groups built allegiances with the company outside of their needed labor (Harpelle 26). The wages corresponded to racial hierarchies and no matter the circumstances the whites always made more money than Blacks and Hispanics. The West Indians often made more then their Hispanic equivalents, which played into the superiority complex that many West Indians had. United Fruit had a system of keeping wages low by having a surplus of workers and letting the men believe they were earning a substantial amount working for the company, when in reality they were paid just enough for survival. The company paid the workers in company script so that they would purchase a majority of the necessities from the company store. (Purcell). Lastly the presence of the British Consulate in Limón gave West Indian workers an added sense of sovereign superiority, and many felt they were serving the interest of Great Britain in Costa Rica.

Chapter III: Transculturation in the Limón Province

They are not Costa Rican. They are not Jamaicans. Great Britain does not recognize them as citizens because they were born in a foreign country. Costa Rica does not recognize them as citizens because they are black, children of Jamaicans. The Blacks of the second generation are, for a long time, a people without a country, without a recognized identity. They vegetate in a country that suddenly becomes hostile, restricting them. - Quince Duncan cited in Mosby

Transculturation, as defined by Fernando Ortiz, is the phenomena of complex transmutations of race, culture, class, and gender that took place in Cuba during a time period when Afro- Cubans were experiencing increased discrimination from white Cubans and outsiders investing in the island economy (Ortiz 93). This definition can be useful in interpreting similar processes in the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean despite the particularities of each case. Furthermore transculturation is the process of cultural transformation, as in the creation of new cultures or societies, resulting from intercultural conflict, struggle and change (Cantoral n.pag). The course of transculturation starts with the initial migration of immigrants to a receiving country. The process alters when there is a generation born in the receiving country and they grow up in two worlds. As they mature some of this group desires to be a part of the mainstream society while other parts of the group desire to stay connected to their home country. The evolution of transculturation for the Afro-Costa Ricans began with the initial migration of

the immigrants to Costa Rica through the United Fruit Company. It progressed rapidly as the company departed from the east coast and shaped the political economy of perception that the West Indians had. My research shows that West Indians would have preferred to maintain their foreign resident status and tied to the United Fruit Company as long as their futures were secure. The United Fruit Company influenced power over self-identity of the laborers and the space of Limón. The West Indians who were contracted to work on the banana plantations saw the Hispanic peasants as inferior because they were uneducated, disenfranchised, and made no apparent attempt to develop the lowlands of Costa Rica before the company arrived. The West Indian employees imagined themselves as superior because they spoke the same language as the company officials and had a British colonial status that was deemed acceptable by Anglo-European culture. Also they viewed their recruitment to work and develop another country as proof of greater physical and mental strength in addition to adaptability skills (Purcell 36). The company provided laborers with a livelihood that was greater than what they would have received if they stayed on their home islands and assembled a contested space between the West Indian and Hispanic workers due to social positions being defined by the different control of resources and access to power, in this case the English language being the avenue to those in power (Neely and Samura 1938).

As the Black population in the Limón province grew, the Costa Rican government began fearing that their country would gradually get darker (skin complexion) due to miscegenation. La Sociedad Economica de Amigos del País was a xenophobic nationalist group that was sympathetic to labor and small producers. They pushed for the

nationalizing of all of the United Fruit Company holdings and for all of their land to be turned over to Costa Rican citizens. This group was one of many that were behind the growing opposition to the United Fruit Company and their foreign workforce. They stated that West Indian immigration was not desirable and that the blacks in Costa Rica should be sterilized. One could summarize at a time of economic crisis that promoting black genocide was equal to national pride and economic protectionism that La Sociedad wanted to achieve. They felt blacks were prone to violence and that their presence threatened to mongrelize the white race. West Indians were imagined as animals and not having any morals and rights, they claimed that West Indians were prone to insanity, tuberculosis and syphilis (Harpelle 22). The xenophobic reaction was not unexpected but the workers were the most visible aspect of the multinational's presence in the country. West Indians were different in almost every aspect from the Costa Ricans: their blackness, language, socio-cultural practices and deference to the government. Critics felt they and the company were undermining the country's national identity as a white-settler society (Harpelle 22). The depiction of West Indian black as an alien element within the national organism, whose earning were sent abroad and who had no allegiance to the nation became standard among Costa Rica intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940. The result of this anti black racism flowed through the Hispanic workers and Costa Rican planters and influenced the 1934 contracts (Putnam 73).

United Fruit and the Costa Rican government had contracts during the tenure of the company's existence in Limón and in the contract of 1934, the West Indians were singled out. The contract stipulated that there be preferential hiring of Costa Ricans and

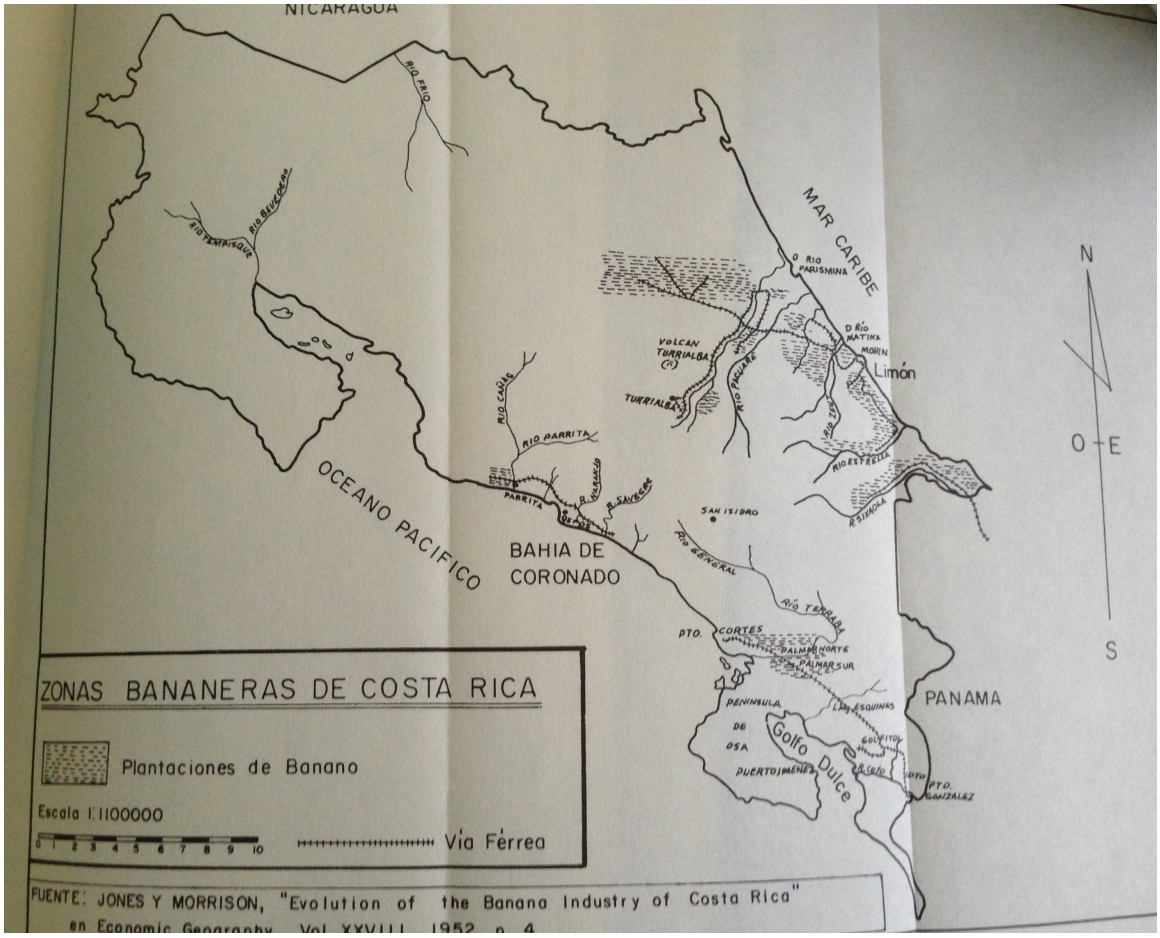
the company was granted permission to relocate to the Pacific coast. As a result of this several congressional deputies issued statements because they felt the company had successfully Africanized a sector of the national territory and in order to prevent further 'Africanization', they wanted 60 percent of the work force to be Costa Rican (Harpelle 120).

Due to public pressure, congress created a commission to look into the business arrangements of United Fruit. They found the company to be in violation of most of the clauses of the contract. The commission urged the government to give the company sanctions but the company did not react or change towards the West Indians. They still had considerable power in the country because the world was in the midst of a depression and the company was a large employer. Although the company did not publically support the sanctions towards their black workers, they began instituting policies within their subsidiaries. The northern railway company, a subsidiary, began having skin color requirements and it was a major determinate if a worker was terminated; often West Indians with seniority were released over Hispanic Costa Ricans. When the company relocated to continue to operations in Costa Rica, the contract of 1934 was ratified and one article directly affected the West Indians. Article five was a companion law that established a preference for Costa Rican workers in the banana industry and the prohibition of colored people from employment with the company on the Pacific coast (Harpelle 98). A majority of the West Indians in Limón was silent about the new agreement because they were economically vulnerable to the company and had no say in an agreement that would affect their future. There was never a law that prohibited the free

movement of West Indians in Costa Rica, only that United Fruit could not hire them (Harpelle 98). However during the late 1930s if workers were caught going beyond the town of Turrialba, the town between the black lowlands and white highlands, they were rounded up and sent back to the Atlantic Coast (Purcell 43). The de facto segregation from the 1930s until the civil war of 1948 continues to affect the West Indian population since most have preferred to stay on the Atlantic Coast due to the personal connections they have to the area.

The principal reason for the relocation of United Fruit was based on the spread of disease among the bananas. Banana plantations are always evolving due to the need for more space for cultivation. In optimum conditions, a plantation could last as long as 25 years, but due to disease, their time was shortened (Harpelle 63). After the contract of 1934 was passed, there was noted public segregation within Limón. The municipality denied the Afro-Costa Ricans access to recreational activities. Areas in the same hospital were separated by race, neighborhoods were segregated, and with a special zone for the North American banana company workers and hotels denied access to Afro- Costa Ricans. By 1940, the Atlantic Region transformed quickly into an area of expulsion; former plantations were abandoned by workers as a consequence of the exit of the United Fruit Company.

Map of Banana Zones in Costa Rica after the contract of 1934



(Gaspar)

Between 1934 and 1955, a majority of the Afro-Costa Rican population left the province to emigrate to the United States or back to their home countries. The United Fruit Company and the workers who emigrated to the province created a foreign territory within a territory. The company carved out a space in a secluded part of the country that was disregarded by the Costa Rican government because they were unable to settle the area. Before the province was incorporated into the Costa Rican scope, there were three hegemonic powers in the province of Limón: The United Fruit Company, the British

Empire, and the Costa Rican Government. It was a disputed space that linked the three powers over the period. The United Fruit Company was the principal power because they helped to develop the area and imported the workers to the region. The British Empire had a consulate in Puerto Limón to protect their investments in the area and their colonial subjects. The Costa Rican government held the least power in the province during this period because they allowed for the foreign company and empire to police and develop the space. Once the company departed the eastern coast a majority of the laborers left the region as well as the British consulate. In the end, the Costa Rican government filled the power vacuum and transformed the space. The government soon wanted to colonize the Atlantic region by giving favorable deals to Costa Ricans from the central valley. They wanted this group to develop agriculture ventures on the land left behind by the company (Alvarado 69).

The West Indians in Limón never took into account that the company would leave the Atlantic coast. Yet to maintain a profit the company quickly abandoned the community they built. When the company left it was disastrous in material and human terms because not only were jobs lost but also the Costa Rican government increased their efforts to incorporate the coast into the rest of the country. The company provided training and skilled positions, which led to others having the ability to become independent producers or small business owners. The United Fruit Company served as a buffer for the West Indian population, but after their exit, the Black population had to adjust to Hispanics being in control. When the West Indians realized who held the power, they began playing into the demands of the new hegemonic power, so that their

socioeconomic endurance and advancement would happen. A radical transformation took place when the Costa Rican government took control of the Atlantic coast, there was a transfer of from large multinational production to small scale independent production and control of the province went from a foreign enterprise to the state. Limón went from being an enclave plantation system to an appendage of Costa Rica. There was an increased attempt to Hispanicize the space with Spanish taught in schools and enhanced goals for West Indians to become citizens.

The next issue to be conquered by the Costa Rican government was increasing the number of legal citizens in the province of Limón. Being born in Costa Rica during the early 20th century did not automatically make a person a citizen, at least not for the Limón residents. Their children were considered legal residents and had to apply for citizenship (Harpelle 150). Within the ratified constitutions of 1917, 1946, and 1949, in regard to children born of foreign parents as long as one parent was foreign the child could not be a citizen until they applied for citizenship later in life. In the 1942 regulation of migration, 3 articles defined the undesirables as Blacks, Chinese, Syrians, and Gypsies, delinquents and the mentally disabled (Alvarado 16).

The first steps toward citizenship began in 1931, when a law under the Gonzalez Viquez administration required all inhabitants to carry identification cards as a means of documentation. Many West Indians did not want to be identified because they had previous negative experiences with the government and did not want the government to have further control over their lives. The cards were necessary for all public transactions and could be requested by any public official. The government even began pressuring the

community leaders to convince West Indians to obtain identification cards, still many resisted. Five years later, a residential certificate was introduced to prove that the person was in the country legally during the Cortes administration (1936-1940). If people resisted they could be fined, denied services, subject to imprisonment, or expelled from the country. Although there was pressure from community leaders, West Indians continued to resist. Afro-Costa Ricans were faced with two options, they could become naturalized or they could leave; A large amount did migrate (Harpelle 151). The younger generations of Afro-Costa Ricans chose to stay in Costa Rica because it was the only country they knew. For those who stayed in the country they could either resist assimilation or try to integrate into society. Becoming a citizen had advantages because they would be allowed access to education, property and employment. Costa Rica had a law that allowed for Costa Rican born West Indians to opt for citizenship but the numbers were low prior to 1928, however as the pressure increased for citizenship, more individuals took advantage of the option. One unexpected consequence of citizenship was the social mobility gained by those who lived in the central valley and outside of the Limón province. Although they would be far from their family networks, those who moved to the central valley received their citizenship quicker than their families in the lowlands and received more legal protection within the Costa Rican constitution (Harpelle 153). The impact of this movement is seen today in relation to the population of Afro-Costa Ricans within the capital city of San José. While I was conducting field research, a black passenger on a bus I was riding patted me on the back as she departed. This demonstration of mutual identification and acknowledgment shows the minority

black presence in the capital city. As the government began instituting more legislation to control the descendants of West Indian Blacks, there was a new law in 1944 that restricted young Afro-Costa Ricans to apply for citizenship before they were 22 or they would lose the option to do so. Nonetheless there was increased citizenship drives but many were reluctant to become citizens because associating with the Costa Rican state was seen as traitorous to the community. As the citizenship issue took center stage those who resisted it were seen as outcasts by the Black community leaders. The perceived leadership took the side of the government because they wanted increased benefits to be brought to the region, improved infrastructure and recognition for the black contribution to the country. These leaders blamed the West Indians, who did not want to assimilate, for the abuses they received because they were not proactive enough to get citizenship for their families or send their children to Spanish speaking schools. They even became targets of discrimination within the West Indian community because the leaders knew that the continued security of the entire group was based on getting everyone to become citizens. This was an idea planted by the government because they applied pressure to assimilate or emigrate (Harpelle 157).

The small towns in the southern region of the Limón province served as a microcosm to the issues affecting Afro-Costa Ricans in the country. To be recognized by the state, the first step was to register children with a Spanish-speaking judge so that the citizenship process will be easier when they reached maturity. The judges usually did not speak English so they gave the children names instead or often spelled English names wrong. The act of giving children Spanish names due to the lack of English proficiency

was another way the Costa Rican state went about homogenizing the culture and increasing their power over Afro-Costa Ricans. If groups did not understand the names given to them, how could they understand themselves? The misspelling of English name led to lost benefits due to the wrong names on forms. The Afro-Costa Rican had to accept this treatment, since they held no political power in the area (Palmer 185).

Education and language are tools of a hegemonic power to promote nation building with its youngest citizens. When the relationship between the United Fruit Company was terminated by the move to the Pacific coast, the process of transculturation was further ingrained when the government took control of the education system.

Language acquisition can be the first step in the acculturation process. When a people learn a language, they are able to use it to their benefit and the oppressor can no longer use it as a tool to discriminate. The citizens of Limón used their status as British subjects to their advantage as security, to maintain ties to their original homes, and had strong sentiments when it came to Great Britain. The largest difference between the original immigrant group and their future descendants was the languages spoken. The first two generations to settle in Costa Rica spoke patois and English but the next groups spoke both Spanish in school and English in the community and home (Harpelle 112). To the first two generations of West Indians in Costa Rica, English was a language of power and prestige since they were able to work and communicate with the North American fruit company officials and the British consulate that was present in the province. This changed to when the government took control of the region and Spanish became the language of power and business. The ability to be bilingual did not imply the loss of their

first culture but their citizenship was compromised since they had to sacrifice a language that was meaningful in order to be accepted by Costa Rica.

The Protestant Church ran the schools in Limón and English was taught in the province. Limón had the highest literacy rates during the first 40 years of the twentieth century because West Indian parents' valued education and the community supported the teachers. The churches provided education for students because initially the Costa Rican government did not see the children of workers as citizens and therefore they were not responsible for sending teachers to the coastal lands (Harpelle 125). The role of the Protestant Church as an educational institution was to teach the students the basic levels of subjects and it ended with minimal technical training. When state (Spanish) schools began to arrive on the coast, parents looked at them with suspicion since their children would be learning a language not their own, one they called the bird language meant to imply the superiority of the English language. The West Indians practiced resistance and cultural superiority by not sending their children to the state schools as long as possible (Purcell 94).

The government saw the Protestant system as a threat because they were outside of government control, did not teach Spanish, and did not instill national sentiment in the children. With new regulations on schools, private schools had to alter their hours so that children could attend public-state run schools. By 1944 a decree was passed that made private school illegal and by 1945 fluency in Spanish was a prerequisite for attendance in all schools. There were other private schools in the country but those were in Spanish instruction so they were allowed to stay open (Harpelle 127). This was a means to force

Spanish on the children and people in the province, but the government did not take into account that the first language was English or the patois (a mixture of English and Creole) and making Spanish a prerequisite for school marginalized the population even more. For those who were able to go to school, they were introduced to a curriculum and history that was foreign to Limón and forced to speak Spanish or were punished. They were also taught their people did not have a national consciousness or spiritual nationality. Sadly, the children learned to look upon their own culture as something alien and improper. As time passed the patois that the West Indians spoke was also changed due to the forced Spanish education. An example of this is when a teacher asked a student to copy the date, he replied "Tiicha, wi af tu kopiar di fecha?" this shows the merging of the two languages, intense acculturation, and the creation of a new Creole language that showed how the youngest generations defined language. Spanish was seen as the proper language to be spoken amongst professionals and in formal relationships (Harpelle 46). To contrast this point of view the spoken language of the people of Limón was not an inferior code but rather an expression of the old home in a new land. To have used regional English or the Limónese Creole was to reject the standards and the super structures imposed by cultural hegemony of an absent political power (Mosby 56). In order to become citizens, the black population sacrificed the important values of educating their children by fellow West Indians. The use of Hispanic teachers resulted in cultural practices and history not to being taught in the classroom, which led to Afro-Costa Rican children viewing their ethnicity as inferior to the Hispanic, whitened customs of their teachers.

In the microcosm of the Talamanca coast, teachers were easy to come by because many had migrated from Jamaica but the difficulty lay in keeping them in the towns, which did not offer the same excitement as the city of Limón. To fund teachers' salaries parents organized fundraising concerts and school boards. It was common for teachers to leave mid- school year halting education until the next teacher was hired, therefore some parents began moving to Limón so that their children would have a better education. The first Spanish teachers began arriving on the Talamanca coast as early as 1927, however many did not stay due to the climate and the inability of Hispanic Costa Ricans to thrive since they were far from their homes, unable to be paid a sufficient salary by the community. These communities were also used as beginner classrooms for those new teachers so they would leave after training was complete. After 1930, there was a permanent school on the coast but it only taught the first and second grades for many years until José Figueres ventured to the coast during his campaign (Palmer 152). José Figueres is seen as a folk hero in Afro-Costa Rica because he is accredited with bringing Blacks into the political process. He organized a political party that was moderate and was supported by various social classes and groups. The Black support was also important when he took control of Puerto Limón during the war. Although the province was not the most important in the nation, the port was important because the railway to Limón allowed for the country to connect to their allies by sea. In 1953, after the war, Figueres was the only candidate to campaign in the province. He spoke English, kissed babies and danced with black women. His appearances validated the acceptance of people of African descent. He and his party won the presidential election and 75% of the

seats in congress. His main support came from the middle class, women, and the Afro-Costa Rican community (Harpelle 181).

After the civil war, the state education system finally replaced the education system fashioned after the Jamaican model and Spanish replaced English as the language of business, government, and interethnic discourse. English began to lose its prestige after the relocation of the company. English had a negative value; Spanish became the language of power, prestige and access to livelihood. The advantages of bilingualism were not encouraged until the mid 1970s (Purcell 46).

The use of language in Costa Rica is an indicator of position, aspiration, the relationship between geographical space, type of economic activity and the level of acculturation. The province was home to Spanish, standard Limón English and Limón Creole, a changed form of Jamaican Creole. Individuals changed what language they spoke depending on their environment. Also due to the multiple generations living in Limón, there was a difference in language use. The first two generations were more likely to speak the Limón Creole, while the younger generations spoke a standard Limón English and Spanish. Geographic location also played a part due to rural areas speaking more Limón Creole than those who were closer to the city of Limón. In towns outside of Puerto Limón, Spanish was spoken if they were near Hispanics. If American or European tourists were around Limón Creole would be spoken out of deference to them. Spanish is the language of power, prestige, respectability, and whitening; and those who spoke it in the community were held in high regard. The younger generations, who were educated in Spanish, saw any form of English as being a bad language, calling it a banana language.

In Puerto Limón, Spanish was the dominating language in public and private spaces. It has increasingly infiltrated the private spaces because parents wanted their children brought up "right" and not influenced by the English. The use of Spanish can be seen as what Afro- Costa Ricans aspire to be; therefore it was better and more decent than using English, which is what they were leaving behind. The two languages reflect a separation of the domains of social activity and the languages form a single system of discourse, a system that gives an indication of a hierarchization of social contexts as marked by language use (Purcell 124).

Chapter IV: Incorporating the Barbaric: the Neo-colonial Re-conquest of Space

"The second generation born and raised in Costa Rica, legally stateless, clung to a legend of a happy and idealized Jamaica. Identity was questioned but still without a true crisis they clung to a country that only existed in the world of dreams"- Quince Duncan (Mosby 115)

This chapter will primarily argue that existing contemporary sources have not attempted to observe the connections between the physical incorporation of the Limón province, and the political incorporation of its inhabitants in terms of the production of racialized space. Secondly, it will seek to understand the lasting effects of this incorporation through the concept of double consciousness. Subsequently, I will explore identity construction, political participation, education and health disparities affecting the Afro-Costa Rican population.

When the Partido Liberación Nacional (PLN) took power after the civil war of 1948, the party founders worked on rebuilding a national identity to improve tense relations throughout the country. The ideology popularized by the party was one of egalitarianism, a blind faith in equality, and emphasized strong European ancestry with connections to the Spanish settlers. However, the Afro-Costa Ricans had supported the side of the victor and as political pay back, José Figueres encouraged them to accept citizenship and courted them in subsequent elections (Purcell 45). In an effort to obscure

the racial question, Figueres made an effort not to include race in the census so that those distinctions could not be made (Purcell 84). In reality, the physical incorporation of the Limón province was an orchestrated effort to re-conquer the now black space from the descendents of West Indian migrants who were seen as barbaric and foreign. Incorporation into the egalitarian Costa Rican national community was depicted as a process that would be beneficial for the Afro-descendant population in order to gain equality with the rest of the country. In practice incorporation was a means to create a profit from the physical space of the Limón province, while subordinating and imposing inferiority on the black population through creating a zone of second-class citizens and substandard living conditions. The Afro-Costa Ricans constituted an alien, unwanted group that contradicted the popular international image of Costa Rica as a racially homogeneous society. However there were more than 19,000 Afro-Costa Ricans in the country after the civil war and composed a voting bloc that could influence elections.

The struggle faced by Afro-Costa Ricans after the political integration of the post war years was not a social or cultural adjustment instead it was one for recognition autonomous as full citizens to fully control their lives without unnecessary influence from the government. The incorporation came with requirements. If Afro-Costa Ricans wanted to make demands on the political system they would have to endorse the political ideology of the government (Purcell 160).

Afro-Costa Ricans engaged in a process of reconciling identity and place making that represents a symbolic integration of their ethno-linguistic community within the nation and the dominant Hispanic culture of Costa Rica. This involved learning to

identify with the country of their birth, not the islands of their ancestors, and letting go of the myth of the return to an unfamiliar island. They attempted to transform the alienation of ancestral exile and displacement by accepting their land of birth, where their forbearers labored, as home. Double consciousness to the third and subsequent generations was recognizing the ambivalence of their citizenship while confronting their blackness.

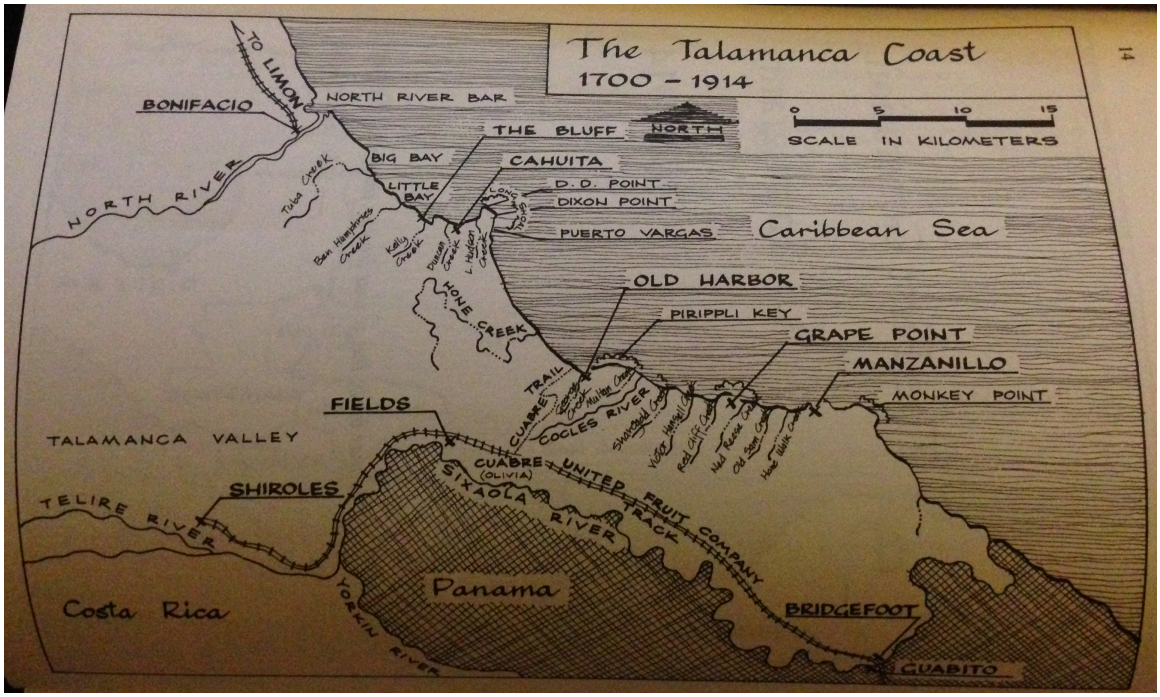
In Afro-Costa Rican writing and culture revealed the struggle to be Costa Rican and Black, which is characterized by a difficult negotiation of difference and national identity. The Afro-Costa Rican community is the product of complex migrations and transmigrations: the transatlantic passage of African slaves to the West Indies and the dispersal of Caribbean peoples all over the world. Afro-Costa Rican identity emerges as the result of migration of a colonized population who were once the ethnic majority at "home" to a situation as a neo-colonized, ethnic minority population in a country with its own distinct cultural heritage (Mosby 234). By invoking this theory in relation to Latin America we are able to reconnect Latin America to the African Diaspora and map black politics in Latin America as going beyond national territory to embrace experiences of migration. The denial of the existence of double consciousness in Costa Rica, by Afro-Costa Ricans, obscures the struggle of African descended people and leaves little possibility for understanding assertion of black identity and challenges to racial oppression and inequality. The set of core concepts that will underline this chapter are similar to those that define racial inequality. The concepts are unequal incorporations in social political and economic life of the nation; a negative and limiting set of stereotypes that operate to define the group; and informal barriers to achievement. Du Bois's concept

of double consciousness was in its inception an international construct that challenged the politics of representation (Sawyer 136).

BLACK POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

After the civil war of 1948, there was a re-emergence of Afro- Costa Rican political organizations. There were various ways in which the Black population pressed for forms of political inclusion. In 1951, a group named the Black Whiz promoted the increased participation of Blacks in politics. The change of political parties and increased involvement of Afro-Costa Ricans led to racist legislation being overturned. In 1960, law 3844 (del 5-1-60) was ratified which prohibited discrimination in the workplace based on race. In 1967, the government signed the International Convention to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, repealing entrance restrictions. Lastly in 1968 a Black deputy introduced Law 4230 that would prohibit the discrimination of blacks in entertainment centers and hotels. Despite these advances on paper, this region of the country continued to be largely neglected, forcing the black population to act strategically in the face of the neglect for example in the locality of the Talamanca coast, a rural section in southern parts of the Limón province, was revitalized in the early 1960's during a time of economic crisis. The main crop, cocoa, was being sold at a loss affecting the community negatively. Community leaders lobbied the Minister of Public Relations to help the farmers on the coast. He suggested cutting down existing cocoa and planting bananas and plantains. The government would not aid the community with financing this new venture, and the community leaders contacted the United States embassy for help.

Map of the Talamanca Coast



(Palmer 14)

This event was illuminated firstly because it provided evidence of state neglect of the region and secondly it demonstrated the continued willingness of Limón's black population to appeal to the powers outside of the nation-state and a tacit recognition of their status as secondary citizens. Since they were accustomed to being neglected by the Costa Rican state they reverted to activating a relationship with a foreign state authority. This relationship with the United States is ambivalent; on one hand it shows the continued relationship of dependence with the United States that characterized the history of the Limón province. On the other hand, this foreign connection can be seen as a tactic for survival in a space in which they were citizens in name only. An embassy official, Hugh C. Lobi, helped the community establish a regional association so that the Alliance

for Progress, which was a part of the Peace Corps and an organization to supposedly advance democracy in the western hemisphere during the Cold War, could provide the materials needed in exchange for cocoa that was under price. If the Alliance for Progress had not intervened in the plight of the Afro-Costa Rican community, the community would have been in disarray. The government continued to show that they did not care for the forgotten region of the Atlantic coast unless it served their purposes (Palmer 211).

Afro-Costa Rican organizations continued to work for basic services infrastructure that were already available to those in other parts of the country. They worked towards improved roads, potable water supply, electricity, waste disposal, sewage pipelines, parks, and safe buildings (Alvarado 47). The lack of political incorporation resulted in substandard infrastructure in the coastal province. According to a study commissioned by the Costa Rican government to discuss the marginalized regions of the country in 1979 the infrastructure issues are: Contamination of slaughterhouses and beaches, lack of land titles, lack sewage treatment, unsanitary water, inefficient waste disposal, proliferation of mosquitoes, and lack of extended pipe distribution (Oficina de Informacion; Presidencia de la Republica de Costa Rica 44). These issues exhibited the national government's lack of concern and a form of neglect for the health of those who lived in the region. Although Limón is important to the country economically due to the agriculture grown in the province and its ports connection to the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, the government at the time displayed that after 30 years portions of the province were still not integrated with the rest of the country. One of the biggest issues that showed the lack of incorporation was the minimal transportation connection. This

was felt throughout the province since after the civil war, it was easier to travel to the United States and back from Puerto Limón than it would have been to travel to southern parts of the province, which was only 36 miles away from the city (Purcell 53). When the decision was made to build a road in the rural black areas of the Atlantic zone, it took 24 years for the road to be constructed that connected the Talamanca community to Limón by road. It took several actors to complete this, ranging from private companies who needed the roads to private citizens who contributed time and money to the building of the road. The community communicated with various presidents and political parties yet each incoming government only provided funds for a few kilometers of roadway.

Latin American national projects have valorized Black culture in imagining the nation. At the same time, their black populations have historically had unequal access to social, political and economic power. It is this duality that developed in a growing literature on race and Latin America and that can be described as inclusionary discrimination (Sawyer 136). In Costa Rica, during the 1960s there was overt discrimination by foreigners in Limón and more subtle discrimination by Hispanic Costa Ricans. In Limón, a businessmen's club had restricted membership that discriminated against the black business owners. Some of the prejudices were de facto with Afro-Costa Ricans knowing when they were not wanted in certain establishments and therefore did not venture there (Olien 14).

Hispanic Costa Ricans and even some Afro-Costa Ricans subscribe to the ideology that everyone receives equal opportunities and that if there is any discrimination, it is based on social rather than racial factors. As told to Purcell, a black

farmer in 1978 believed that if one carried himself with respect and respected the Spanish than they can go anywhere in the country (Purcell 48). Despite the reality of discrimination, the belief that there are no prohibitive spaces for the black population in Costa Rica is still articulated today. Those born in the central valley have had to confront the national myths of whiteness with their own repudiated blackness. There is a conflict between the desire to belong and the failure of this outcome to materialize (Mosby 16).

However, In August of 1989, a large-scale protest took place in Puerto Limón that involved students, unions, carriers, peasant organizations and other community groups. They were all under the coordination of the Permanent Council for Study and Solution of the Problems of Limón, (C.P.E.S.P.L). This organization came together to highlight the problems of the province. Some of the issues addressed dealt with the lack of goods and services available in the province versus the central valley. The history of marginalization, instability and the absence of the model benefits of the welfare state that Costa Rica was known for internationally. This protest in 1989 was important because it combined many groups who wanted to see a broad change in the social services and demonstrated that incorporation was not the positive policy that the government showcased but rather a way to increase national territory and income (Proyecto Urbano 1).

The injustices against Afro-Costa Rican women have largely been invisible when compared to women of other ethnicities in Costa Rica. Through political struggle women have largely been invisible, the Association of Afro-Costa Rican Women has been trying to change this since 1992 with contributions from professional women and grassroots

organizers. Black women have limitations in regard to their contribution to political, social and economic development of the country. They are given even fewer opportunities in decision-making positions outside of the social service ministries or departments dealing with the Afro-population. This method of exclusion has created an elitist economic, political, and social system. When Afro-Costa Rican women are appointed to positions they are tokens to show diversity in administrations. These token positions cause women to fight more than women of other ethnicities in order to obtain respectable positions in society (Royal 277).

AFRO- COSTA RICANS AND THE ECONOMY

Economically Afro-Costa Ricans continued to be behind their Hispanic counterparts after the civil war and subsequent political incorporation. Since incorporation Limón has the lowest salary scale of any province outside of the impoverished northern zone although it holds a distinct economic importance to the country (Purcell 102). After 1950, the government wanted to integrate the regional economy of the Atlantic coast with the national economy. In order to spur development, in 1956, the banana industry would be reintroduced to the Atlantic coast and was nationalized. Exporters were taxed in order to fund the infrastructure improvements of the region. The government hoped with the companies returning that it would help the local economy grow, improve standard of living, and diversify agriculture. The power dynamic was unequal with power and money remaining in the hands of few Hispanic officials. The regional power was kept in Puerto Limón, which caused political tension throughout the region (Alvarado 30). The socioeconomic advantage at the time favored

the Hispanic whites that lived in the area due to the higher wages and nature of their professions. The Afro-Costa Ricans in the area were more likely to perform unskilled manual labor. Although they were well educated the opportunity to get a better paying job was not available causing them to immigrate to other locations if possible (Olien 11). Limón had an issue with keeping their population in the province due to the lack of opportunities for professionals and students. In order to boost the population of the area the government reintroduced the banana plantations to the province and the migrants came from around the country to work.

The government in the 1970s began sending land surveyors from the National Park service to establish parts of Cahuita into a national park. The formation of a national park at the detriment of the local people in the area can be read as neo-colonialism of the area. Those who lived in the proposed areas would have to sell their land or pay an annual concession to harvest their crops. Coastal farmers and fishermen were given conflicting regulations about what they could do in the parks. The government wanted to protect the natural resources at the expense of the people living in the area. The government proposed that if the park opened it would protect the natural resources, provide an area for education and recreation, provide jobs to those who lived in the area by allowing them to sell concessions at the entrance of the park and fisherman to give tours of the reef. There would also be camping facilities for large groups and a grocery store. The government understood that tourists would bring in money so they wanted to make the national park a reality because during the time, many North Americans and Europeans valued nature conservation. We can conclude from this that

when it was beneficial to the government to appropriate their land, an illusion was made of appealing to the local residents, but in the end guarantees were not be upheld and the citizens were not protected (Palmer 231).

AFRO-COSTA RICANS AND EDUCATION

As discussed in previous sections, education is the first step in including a group in the national discourse. During the 1960s the schools system in the Puerto Limón consisted of a pre-school, five primary schools and one high school in 1964. Attendance at the primary school was required for six years. Students then could go to high school for five years but they must pass the exit exam in order to graduate. The high school offered day and night classes since some students had to work. The age range at the time was from 17 to 32 years old. The greatest problem was the poverty of the area. The high school also had high drop out rates due to academic and financial reasons. There is no tuition, but students have to provide their own uniforms and other supplies. These supplies were a burden to large families especially when students who dropped out of school could get jobs at the docks and contribute to the household. However by the sixties these jobs were becoming obsolete.

If students could make it to their third year in high school, they were usually able to finish in five years without having to repeat a year. Students received scholarships to get higher education but the scholarships were so small that it took many sources of income to pay tuition. Up to 10 percent of students had some desire to get a college degree or attend technical schools; however in 1964, out of the 7000 students at the university only 75-80 was from the Atlantic area. Few students returned to the coast to

work, most stayed in San José or traveled to Mexico, Germany, France, or the United States if they spoke English. The incentive to return was limited due to lack of job opportunities (Mennerick 60). There was still an issue with disparities in levels of education. In San José, the percent of population with no amount of formal education was 3% while in Limón the percent was more that 10%. Those with an university level education in Limón were 5% of the population while in San José it was 16%. In all levels of education those in Limón always had less education due to access and cost of schooling (Alvarado 141).

Prejudice and discrimination also impacted education, the teachers did not teach the history of Blacks in the country, some believed the Afro-Costa Ricans, did not pray, had tails, and wore loincloths. The values of Blacks were ignored and the Afro-Costa Rican children that were in school at this time were taught that they came from an ignorant and inferior race (Melendez and Duncan 122). In order to be great, children could only aspire to be the Costa Rican ideal and leave their culture behind. On the western coast of the country, everything associated with Afro-Costa Ricans was symbolized with negativity. The blame for these teachings and feelings is not on any particular group but the social system that reinforced the prejudice. In order for incorporation to take place, all forms of their blackness had to be erased and education was a way to be the expunge process (Melendez and Duncan 123). Now these issues have been brought to light and it is the responsibility of teachers and parents to change mindsets. There was a general fear of hiring Afro-Costa Ricans because they were all thought to be drunks, boisterous and incapable of intellectual work. Afro-Costa Ricans

were treated differently in stores by being called Moreno or Morena (brown) instead of Señora or Señor. If outside of the Limón province, they would be reminded by policemen to be careful since they were in San José (Melendez and Duncan 125). In the 1970s as mentioned in previous sources, teachers of both races who taught in the province of Limón reinforced the racist stereotypes of the times. White students were told they were superior, while the black students were told they were bad and had black souls. During this period there were some Black students in the central valley and there were cases of discrimination when private school instructors did not admit Black kindergartners to their programs. As of 1984 there were three satellite campuses of the University of Costa Rica in the Limón province. Located in Guapiles, Puerto Limón, and Siquerres. Although the campuses were in the province a majority of the students were actually from other provinces. In the 1980s, The Board of Administration Port and Economic Development, JAPDEVA, was an autonomous body of the state, a public utility company, and assumed the prerogatives and functions of port authority, and commissioned them to build, manage, maintain and operate the existing port of Limón and other sea and river ports on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, quickly and efficiently. This company donated funds to stimulate a better education for the students of the region. The region was suffering from students gaining an education and leaving due to the lack of opportunities. JAPDEVA was trying to reverse this trend and bring professionals back to the region. One of the biggest hindrances to growth was the amount of young people in high school who were excessively distracted by their outside lives that they could not finish their courses (Henavides, Guitierrez and Garro 40).

Finally in 2000, Law 7941 created the Colegio Universitario de Limón, a school that would serve as an alternative to the education system of the past and prepare students for the new millennium since the region of Limón had the lowest percentage out of all the provinces of people who took the exam to receive a bachelor's degree. In 1996, the office of higher education planning initiated a study of the students in the last year of high school in the Limón province. The objective was to find out what the students expected to do after they finished high school and whether or not they planned to go to university. Of the 1095 students survey, 92.7 % wanted to go on to higher education in order to become professionals and to have a better economic future. The National University of Costa Rica recognized the creation of this school because it provided an important and high quality system than the public schools had provided in the region. This school would raise the demands on students in the Limón province and prepare them for a more technical future in order to compete with the rest of the country (EARTH 90).

AFRO-COSTA RICANS AND HEALTH CARE

Health disparities have several causes, but when groups of people are isolated from large cities and neglected by the government these disparities are compounded, as in the province of Limón. In 1978 there were three hospitals, five clinics and one health post in the province of Limón. If residents were too far from a medical facility, they had to use home remedies or went to bush doctors and midwives when they needed help. At times this may have been a choice since many Afro-Costa Ricans did not trust the Hispanic medical professionals (Ponce and Simo 75). Some of the disparities between the province of Limón when compared to the national average was that infant mortality was at its

highest in 1981 with 28.75 per 1000 births, for children under 30 days old the mortality was 14.47 per 1000, and 14.28 for those under 11 months. The general mortality decreased from 5.05% of the population to 4.78 in 1981. The mortality of children between the ages of 1-4 increased in 1981 to 2.42 per 1000 versus 1.92 in 1979. Maternal mortality decreased, however, it should be noted that women who died in childbirth had little access to medical services in the province of Limón. In the southern region of the Limón province there was not a high population, which made it difficult for medical services to be adequate (Alvarado 142). The lack of adequate health service in a country that prides itself on free health care can be seen as genocidal state policy towards the black population[1]. The Costa Rican government gave the impression that the Afro-Costa Rican population was disposable due to high infant and maternal mortality rates and minimal aid to the region.

Lastly, the national government has tried to make amends with their citizens in the province of Limón. In 1986 they began an initiative to incorporate more Afro-Caribbean culture into the curriculum of the Limónese schools. The curriculum would cover those in the margins, the black population, and the indigenous and the rural population. This was a collaborative project between the ministry of public education and the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports. They wanted to touch on all aspects of culture ranging from traditional stories, foods, celebrations, music, and even remedies. This was a government commissioned document that was acquired from the University of Costa

[1] Abdias D. Nascimento explains state neglect based on race as part of a genocidal campaign in *Mixture or Massacre*.

Rica library. It was a collaborative effort by several ministries to analyze material from the ministry of culture, public education, and regional directors. This study took place in four cycles and with each cycle delved deeper into the history and culture of the marginalized populations. The objective of this guide was to provide educators and community leaders a way to connect with their students on a cultural level. There are curriculum guides as well as activity suggestions so that every group feels incorporated. This guide was the commencement of a new stage in Afro-Costa Rican relations as it seemed like the government, 100 years after the building of the railroads and immigrants' arrival, was finally making an effort to highlight the cultural differences within the Afro-Costa Rican community through studies and legislation without the Afro-Costa Ricans having to erase their background to be accepted. However, whether this guide was actually used by educators in the region or outside the region would have proved the effectiveness of the study (Departamento de Ciencias Sociales E Idiomas 2).

This discussion of issues and problems in regards to the economy, education and health care are historical and enduring. Despite the attempts to organize politically, more access to services and the full benefits of citizenship, this chapter has demonstrated that there were various forms of contesting and pressuring the state even as the state attempted to homogenize the population. Gains have been sporadic but the Afro-Costa Ricans have continued to obstruct the national project based on whitening their culture and pressed for an identity based on difference and autonomy.

Conclusion

The past 150 years for Afro descendents in Costa Rica has been a journey for an improved quality of life, seclusion from the national identity, forced political incorporation, and finally recognition of citizenship. I chose to investigate this case study because I wanted to discover why there was a lack of Afro- Costa Ricans represented demographically in the capital of Costa Rica, San José. Throughout my research, I have attempted to demonstrate the impact of a foreign North American company in Costa Rica has had lasting economic, social, and political effects on the laborers and government of this Central American country. The hegemonic forces of the United Fruit Company and Costa Rican government aided in producing a black geography due to the primary location of the banana plantations and the de facto segregation of the country. Coupled with the West Indian immigrants' cultural infusions, the Limón province was made into a distinct territory within the nation-state. The domination of the hegemonic forces and the contestation of subordination by the Afro-Costa Ricans have allowed a Black identity to emerge from the isolation and have transformed feelings of self-hate and inferiority to a positive black consciousness. Throughout the black presence in Costa Rica there have been periods of segregation, forced inclusion, and homogenization. Despite these negative actions on the Afro-Costa Rican culture there is still a strong identification with blackness and their distinct heritage. While doing my fieldwork, I met a preteen informant who when asked if she saw herself as a Tica or Tico, a name that Costa Ricans call themselves, she quickly corrected me and explained her background. "I am Afro-

Limónese, I am not a Tica," I was surprised that someone so young had such a conviction in her identity. Although children are taught cultural norms from a young age, she was proof that most Afro-Costa Rican citizens understand the subtle inequalities and want their children to recognize and embrace their differences. In the future, there needs to be further study on how Afro-Costa Rican identity in the 21st century and what the national government is doing to further extend meaningful citizenship to residents of the Limón province.

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